

Message Text

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41

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 INR-10 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

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INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5726

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: THE LULL IN CHUONG THIEN

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM RECEIVED APRIL 5 TH FROM AMCONSUL CAN THO
ACTION SAIGON REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAN THO 0118

E. O. 11652: GDS

R

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJECT: THE LULL IN CHUONG THIEN

1. SUMMARY: FIGHTING IN CHUONG THIEN PROVINCE, SCENE OF MUCH
MILITARY ACTIVITY SINCE THE CEASEFIRE, HAS DIED DOWN APPRECIABLY
DURING THE PAST TWO WEEKS. BBTH VC/ NVA INCIDENTS AND RVNAF
OPERATIONS HAS DECLINED SHARPLY. VICE CONSUL LACY WRIGHT DIS-
CUSSED THE CURRENT SITUATION WITH GVN MILITARY OFFICERS FROM VI
THANH SECTOR, THE JMC, AND THE 21 ST DIVISION. WHILE GENERALLY
PESSIMISTIC, THEY SUGGEST THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE LULL INDICATES
A CHANGE IN STRATEGY BY THE OTHER SIDE, NOTING THAT VC MR III IS
CURRENTLY ORGANIZING A LARGE- SCALE MEETING IN THE CO SAU YEN BASE
AREA. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SITUATION IN CHUONG THIEN PROVINCE HAS BEEN ABNORMALLY
QUIET FOR THE PAST TWO WEEKS AND VC/ NVA INITIATED INCIDENTS AND
RVNAF OPERATIONS HAVE FALLEN MUCH BELOW THE POST- CEASEFIRE NORM.
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SENIOR ARVN MILITARY OFFICERS IN THE AREA ARE NOT CONFIDENT THAT
THIS LULL WILL LAST. THEY ARE INCLINED TO SEE IT AS A PERIOD OF

REST AND RESUPPLY FOR THE OTHER SIDE, AND FORSEE THAT ANOTHER OFFENSIVE WILL BE LAUNCHED IN THE COMING WEEKS OR MONTHS. THEY BASE THIS ASSESSMENT ON CAPTURED DOCUMENTS, INTERCEPTED MESSAGES, AND THE UNCONFIRMED BELIEF THAT MEN AND MATERIEL ARE BEING INFILTRATED INTO THE AREA.

2. THE SAME OFFICERS, HOWEVER, SEE SIGNS OF A POSSIBLE CHANGE IN VC/ NVA INFILTRATION IN THE AREA. COL NGUYEN TIEN LOC, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARVN 21 ST DIVISION, REPORTED THAT INTERCEPTED RADIO MESSAGES INDICATE THE VC/ NVA HAVE CALLED ALL MAIN AND LOCAL FORCE COMMANDERS OF COMPANY LEVEL AND ABOVE, PLUS POLITICAL COMMISSARS, TO ATTEND A MEETING BEING HELD ABOUT SIX KILOMETERS NORTH OF KIEN THIEN DISTRICT TOWN IN THE CO SAU YEN BASE AREA. THE MESSAGES REFER TO THE MEETING AS A DAI HOI DANG, INDICATING ITS SIZE AND IMPORTANCE. COL. LOC THOUGHT THAT SUCH A MEETING MIGHT INDICATE A CHANGE IN PLANS. MR IV G-2 HAS CONFIRMED THAT A LARGE MEETING IS TAKING PLACE AND NOTES THAT A MEETING OF THIS SIZE IS ONLY HELD WHEN A MAJOR CHANGE IN CAMPAIGN STRATEGY IS BEING PLANNED.

4. LTC NGUYEN MAU, CHIEF OF THE GVN VI THANH JMC DELEGATION, AS WELL AS OTHER OFFICERS, STRESSED THE FACT THAT VC/ NVA MORALE IS LOW AND THAT THEY DESIRE AN END TO THE FIGHTING. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE DROP IN MORALE IS PARTIALLY DUE TO A CHANGE IN THE PROPAGANDA LINE BEING FED TO VC/ NVA TROOPS. BEFORE, SAID MAU, THEY WERE URGED TO BE HEROES, GIVING ALL FOR THE FATHERLAND. BEGINNING ABOUT TEN DAYS AGO THEY ARE BEING ENCOURAGED TO " HOLD ON JUST A BIT LONGER, AND THEN YOU CAN GO BACK TO YOUR VILLAGES."

5. COMMENT: THE CURRENT LULL IN CHUONG THIEN IS WORTHY OF NOTE IF ONLY BECAUSE IT IS THE FIRST SINCE THE CEASEFIRE. ITS MEANING IS CURRENTLY DIFFICULT TO ASSESS AND SENIOR GVN OFFICERS IN THE AREA ARE OF DIVIDED OPINIONS AS TO ITS PURPOSE. THEY TOO ARE WEARY OF FIGHTING AND HAVE SEIZED ON THE CHANGE IN VC/ NVA INSTRUCTIONS TO THEIR TROOPS AND THE HOLDING OF AN IMPORTANT PARTY MEETING AS EVIDENCE THAT THE LULL IS MORE THAN A REST AND RESUPPLY PERIOD. FURTHER ASSESSMENT WILL HAVE TO AWAIT THE RESULTS OF THE PARTY MEETING.

BARNES

B UNQUOTE:

WHITEHOUSE

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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